

Application No. 10/579,839
Paper Dated: March 16, 2009
In Reply to USPTO Correspondence of December 16, 2008
Attorney Docket No. 3135-061455

REMARKS

I. Introduction

The Office Action of December 16, 2008 has been reviewed and the Examiner's comments carefully considered. The present Amendment amends claims 16-19 and 30 in accordance with the originally-filed specification. No new matter has been added. Claims 16-30 are currently pending in the above-referenced application, and claim 16 is in independent form.

II. 35 U.S.C. §112 Rejections

Claims 16-30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The Examiner contends that the claims contain subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. Specifically, the Examiner contends that one reading the specification cannot understand what the Applicant is attempting to achieve with independent claim 16. In addition, the Examiner has also rejected claims 16-30 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, the Examiner has indicated that the language of independent claim 16 is vague and indefinite and fails to interrelate the structural elements together so as to provide a workable or functional apparatus.

The Applicant believes that the above amendments to claims 16-19 overcome the Examiner's rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112. Support for these amendments can be found on page 4, line 32 to page 5, line 23 of the specification of the above-referenced application. Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested.

III. 35 U.S.C. §103 Rejections

Claims 16-30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for obviousness based upon United States Patent No. 5,163,222 to Imlig et al. (hereinafter "the Imlig patent"). In view of the following remarks, the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this rejection.

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As defined by amended independent claim 16, the present invention is directed to an apparatus for processing electronic components mounted on a carrier. The apparatus includes: at least two engaging elements which co-act for engaging the carrier; and reference means configured to co-act with the at least two engaging elements. The engaging elements are adjustable, depending on the dimensioning of the carrier, and are provided with at least one reference position that co-acts with the reference means to define a relative orientation.

The Imlig patent is directed to an apparatus for transferring leadframe strips (1) to a bonding station (75). The apparatus includes a transfer mechanism (70), the bonding station (75), an electromotive drive (30), a first group of clamping elements (23-27), and a second group of clamping elements (13-18). The first group of the clamping elements (23-27) is movable relative to the second group of clamping elements (13-18) fixed to a main carrier (10) of the transfer mechanism (70).

The Imlig patent does not teach or suggest engaging elements that are adjustable depending on the dimensioning of the carrier as required by amended independent claim 16. While the Imlig patent discloses a first group of clamping elements (23-27) that is moveable relative to a second group of clamping elements (13-18), the movement of these clamping elements is to transfer a leadframe (1) in a direction indicated by arrow X' shown in FIG. 3 (see column 10, lines 35-58 of the Imlig patent). There is no teaching or suggestion in the Imlig patent that the first group of clamping elements (23-27) and second group of clamping elements (13-18) are adjustable based on the size of the leadframe (1). Instead, the first group of clamping elements moves to advance the leadframe (1) in the direction indicated by arrow X' to the bonding station (75).

To establish *prima facie* obviousness of a claimed invention, all of the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. Where claimed limitations are simply not present in the prior art, a *prima facie* obviousness rejection is not supported. Since the Imlig patent fails to teach or suggest engaging elements that are adjustable depending on the dimensioning of the carrier as required by amended independent claim 16, a *prima facie* case of obviousness has not been established.

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For the foregoing reasons, the Applicant believes that the subject matter of independent claim 16 is neither anticipated by nor obvious over the Imlig patent. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 16 are respectfully requested.

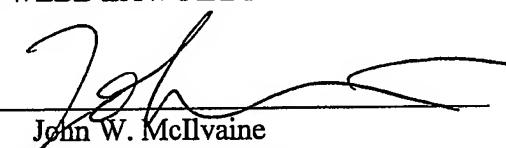
Claims 17-30 depend from and add further limitations to amended independent claim 16 or a subsequent dependent claim and are believed to be patentable for at least the reasons discussed hereinabove in connection with amended independent claim 16. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 17-30 are respectfully requested.

V. Conclusion

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of pending claims 16-30 are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any questions or wish to discuss the application in further detail, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative by telephone at 412-471-8815.

Respectfully submitted,

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